

1 in 3 Nev. motorists may see rise in auto insurance

By Ken Ritter, AP

About one in three Nevada motorists, or as many as 600,000 people, could face a 9 percent jump in auto insurance rates this summer when the state raises the basic required minimum levels of bodily injury and property damage coverage, officials said.

The increase, effective July 1, could amount to about \$10 more a month for average policyholders who have minimum bodily injury coverage of \$15,000 per person and \$30,000 per accident, plus basic \$10,000 per accident in property damage coverage, according to figures provided to state lawmakers when they approved the increase last year.

Read the whole story

EDC wants to buy property in South Lake

El Dorado County has long been in need of additional office space in South Lake Tahoe.

If supervisors on Tuesday say yes, a 6,435-square-foot building on Sandy Way will be theirs.

Owners of Tahoe Beach Retreat have title to the building. Prior to their ownership it was a post office. The U.S. Postal Service closed that site in June 2010.

The purchase agreement price is \$1.25 million.

This deal has been in the works for about a year.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Tahoe Keys working on erosion near pier

Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association is planning to stabilize the south side of the homeowners' pier with a combination of sheet pile wall, boulders and clean sand.

"The revetment will prevent further erosion of the shoreline from lake waves when the lake level is high," Doug Smith with the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This state agency must approve this project in South Lake Tahoe.

The sheet pile and boulder placement is expected to be a one-time installation.

"The clean sand wedge in front of the wall and boulder revetment is 'dynamic' because it is expected to change shape as it absorbs the incoming wave energy, thus reducing the erosion potential. If the lake remains at high levels, the dynamic sand wedge may need to be replenished, but that is not expected for several years, maybe 10 years or so," Smith said.

Any time sand needs to be brought in, a permit from Lahontan is required.

Trees, history part of 2 library presentations

Friends of the South Lake Tahoe Library have scheduled two diverse events. Both are free and open to everyone.

The library is on Rufus Allen Boulevard.

The first is March 27 at 6pm with the Sugar Pine Foundation showing “The Seedling,” a short film that explains the challenges white pines face and how this local organization aims to help. Attendees will meet the staff of the nonprofit and the filmmaker. Bring tree related questions and learn how to get involved in reforesting our local fire scars. Free and open to all.

The next event is April 14, 2pm with the Tuskegee Airmen history. Meet descendants of the original Tuskegee Airmen and hear their stories and learn historical facts about the famed “Red Tails,” the first African-American fighter pilots of World War II.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Tootsie

Tootsie is one of nine cats at the shelter right now. She is a beautiful 1-year-old brown tiger medium hair who has lived with other cats.

Tootsie is spayed, micro chipped for FIV, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet. For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz

LTCC students getting help beyond the classroom

By Lake Tahoe News

Lake Tahoe Community College has set up a pantry of

nonperishable foods and hygiene products for students in need.

“It’s meant to address the very real problem of community college students struggling with learning due to hunger. There’s all kinds of evidence that shows that when college students don’t have their basic needs met like food, shelter, stable living environment, child care, they struggle in their studies and are much more prone to fail and drop out,” LTCC spokeswoman Diane Lewis told *Lake Tahoe News*. “About 73 percent of community college students are nontraditional, meaning that they fit one of these six criteria: they’re part time rather than full, they’re employed full time while in college, they’re financially independent, they have dependents to provide for, they’re a single parent, or they don’t have a high school diploma or a combination of these. That is a high percentage of vulnerability, and insufficient nutrition is often a consequence.”

The college hopes to get a refrigerator so perishable goods could be available as well.

Students may receive two bags of food twice a month.

Criteria to receive the bags include:

- Being a registered LTCC student, either full time or part time.
- Either eligible for the Board of Governors fee waiver, or able to demonstrate financial need through a pay stub or other income verification.

“We aren’t aware that the need is growing – only that hunger and food insecurity are a constant and very real issue on any community college campus, nationwide. We have found that many of our students are unaware of resources available in town for nutrition,” Lewis said. “The food pantry is meant to serve mostly in emergency situations when students need immediate help and don’t know where else to turn for it. In addition to

food and supplies, the pantry will also provide information about local resources that students can tap into.”

The pantry will be stocked through a mix of grant money, donations from community partners, and donations from LTCC staff, faculty, and students. To donate, contact Laura Salinas at 530.541.4660, ext. 549 or lrsalinas@ltcc.edu

Opinion: Most panhandling laws unconstitutional

By Joseph W. Mead, The Conversation

Thousands of U.S. cities restrict panhandling in some way. These ordinances limit face-to-face soliciting, including interactions that occur on sidewalks and alongside roads, whether they are verbal or involve holding a sign.

According to a growing string of court decisions, however, laws that outlaw panhandling are themselves illegal. In light of rulings that found these restrictions to violate the freedom of speech, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver and dozens of other cities have repealed laws restricting panhandling in public places since 2015.

As a professor of law and urban studies, I study how local ordinances can harm the poor, particularly people experiencing homelessness. I volunteer with the American Civil Liberties Union and other nonprofits to help fight for more equitable local policies. And I have brought together nonprofits and individuals to successfully change unconstitutional anti-panhandling laws across Ohio, my home state.

Charitable solicitations

Over the past 30 years, cities have increasingly adopted laws to reduce or eliminate panhandling. Although a few jurisdictions simply ban panhandling outright, most ban the practice in certain areas, such as parks, near roads or near bus stops. Cities also regulate what they call “aggressive solicitation” – a term defined broadly to include behavior like asking for a donation twice, in pairs, or after sunset – on the basis that it can make passersby feel physically threatened or vulnerable to mugging.

The First Amendment protects everything from distributing pornography to waving hateful signs outside military funerals. So it is should not be surprising that it also protects fundraising pitches of all kinds.

In a trilogy of opinions issued in the 1980s, the Supreme Court struck down several state laws that restricted charitable solicitation, including laws that prohibited requests from nonprofits that, according to regulators, spent too much money on fundraising.

In ruling against charitable solicitation limits, the justices established two important precedents. First, charitable solicitation is constitutionally protected speech.

Second, local and state authorities can’t dictate which causes may or may not solicit donations within their borders. A regulator’s paternalistic belief that a cause is unwise or inefficient is not a valid reason to limit speech seeking support for it. The listeners can make that decision for themselves.

Panhandling is a basic form of charitable solicitation with a long history. Almsgiving dates back to the days of ancient Greece and the Bible.

Instead of asking for help on behalf of an animal shelter,

food pantry or any other kind of nonprofit, the panhandlers ask for help satisfying their own personal need. In case after case, the courts have clearly ruled that the Constitution safeguards the right to make personal pitches the same way that it protects the ability of organizations to make their own asks.

The First Amendment guarantees free speech in public spaces like sidewalks, streets and parks. This freedom is extremely broad but is not without limits.

Even constitutionally protected speech can be somewhat regulated in public areas if the government can justify the restriction. Only rarely, however, can the government restrict protected speech in public spaces based on what is being said, as the Supreme Court reminded us in a 2015 ruling on street signs.

Governments primarily try to justify their restrictions on panhandling by saying they benefit most passersby, who consider expressions of poverty and desperation a nuisance, and nearby businesses, which fear losing customers.

But there's no freedom from speech, as the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in *McCullen v. Coakley*, a 2014 case about the rights of protesters to congregate near abortion clinics. The fact that someone within earshot cannot "turn the page, change the channel, or leave the Web site" to avoid hearing a message they don't like is "a virtue, not a vice," wrote Chief Justice John Roberts.

Down and out but not silent

No panhandling bans have made it to the Supreme Court. But in recent years, all lower courts ruling on this issue have found that laws imposing restrictions on sidewalk and roadside solicitation are unconstitutional.

While cities have some legitimate public safety concerns,

focusing on a category of speech misses the point. It is at once too broad and too narrow, covering innocent behavior that isn't threatening and missing much behavior that is problematic.

Instead, cities remain free to regulate problematic behaviors directly, such as prosecuting suspected cases of assault and trespassing or making blocking the sidewalk illegal.

Even better, they can try harder to meet the needs of people who are seeking help rather than attempting to silence them. Portland, Maine, for example, is now hiring panhandlers to clean up public spaces after the courts threw out its restrictive ordinance.

Despite the spate of legal precedents, plenty of these laws remain on the books. Advocates like the American Civil Liberties Union are challenging anti-panhandling laws in Albuquerque, Houston and other places that still enforce this kind of law.

With these measures on their way out, cities now have a good chance to refocus their energies on helping, rather than arresting, their homeless residents.

Joseph W. Mead is an assistant professor at Cleveland State University.

Study: Calif. farmers must adapt to a warming climate

By Brianna Calix, Fresno Bee

Heat waves, droughts and floods are climate trends that will

force California farmers to change some practices – including what they grow – to continue producing yields that historically have fed people nationwide, a new study by the University of California says.

Researchers reviewed 89 studies on California climate trends and impacts on the state's diverse agriculture industry to predict how the industry must adjust through the end of the 21st century.

"Understanding climate change and how it is impacting agriculture can help us develop relevant adaptation strategies and enhance agricultural resilience to climate risks," said Tapan Pathak, the lead author on the paper, which was published on Agronomy.

Read the whole story

Placer school district gets more NRA money than any other in U.S.

By Ryan Sabalow and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

Several local school districts and the University of California system received hundreds of thousands of dollars from the National Rifle Association between 2010 and 2016.

The money, in the form of grants from the NRA Foundation, thrusts what were once largely non-controversial gun- and hunting-safety programs and extracurricular shooting clubs into a bitter national debate about accepting money from the polarizing firearms advocacy group.

The NRA gave about \$1 million in cash and non-cash grants to school organizations and private shooting clubs in the Sacramento region between 2010 and 2016, according to a *Sacramento Bee* review of data obtained by the *Associated Press*.

Read the whole story

States mull 'sanctuary' status for marijuana businesses

By Becky Bohrer, AP

Taking a cue from the fight over immigration, some states that have legalized marijuana are considering providing so-called sanctuary status for licensed pot businesses, hoping to protect the fledgling industry from a shift in federal enforcement policy.

Just hours after U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced on Jan. 4 that federal prosecutors would be free to crack down on marijuana operations as they see fit, Jesse Arreguin, the mayor in Berkeley, summoned city councilman Ben Bartlett to his office with a novel idea.

Berkeley was already the first city in the nation to formally declare itself a sanctuary city on immigration, barring city officials from cooperating with federal authorities. Why not do the same thing with marijuana? Last month, it did.

Read the whole story